



BWSR Academy offers comprehensive training for conservation employees

Featured Project

Each year, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) provides training to conservation-based local government staff during a three-day BWSR Academy.

The goal of the BWSR Academy is to provide **high quality training** for local government staff that **maintains and improves** the delivery of conservation work and meets the shared expectations of BWSR and local resource management boards. Each day of the event features training sessions on a broad range of topics for people with different levels of experience, from people who have just started their conservation career to those with 10-plus years of experience. Participants are able to choose the sessions based on their own goals, so that they can improve their administrative expertise and technical skills that are necessary for the practical management and implementation of conservation work related to BWSR-sponsored programs or activities.



Pictured: 2010 BWSR Academy participants working through a hands-on training session.

Based upon the feedback from the 2010 BWSR Academy, participants were enthusiastic about the training opportunities and looked forward to coming back in 2011. For 2011, the planning team changed the topic gathering system and used a web based survey. This new survey generated over 100 topics ideas with detailed training results. Respondents also identified the anticipated skill level of the training topic, and there will be many opportunities for attendees who want more advanced topics to sharpen their skills.

In addition to the preliminary sorting of the topics, the planning team has set the Academy date for October 25-27 and the location will be central Minnesota at an as yet determined convention site. Many local governments do not have significant resources to spend on a multi-day training event, so BWSR works to keep the registration and lodging fees reasonable. More information is available on the BWSR Academy website: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/academy/.

Location: Central Minnesota

Partners: BWSR, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD), Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (MACDE), and Minnesota Association of District Administrators (ADA).

Project Timeline: Planning begins in February each year. The 2011 BWSR Academy will be October 25-27. Wrap-up and analysis will be November-December 2011.

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Project Costs / Funding Sources: The planning team is striving to keep the costs reasonable while meeting the high quality expectations of our clientele.

Keys to Success: The key to the repeated success of the BWSR Academy is the willingness of ADA and MACDE to be principal supporters of the efforts with their members. In addition, the enthusiasm of local government staff makes this event valuable for both participants and speakers.

BWSR roles: BWSR leads the effort in selecting topics, finding facilities, and providing overall administration and oversight to the Academy effort.

Measurable Outcomes: For the 2010 Academy, attendees were asked to identify their learning goals before the session and then if the Academy met their learning goals. Results show that wetland and organizational capacity topics were most prevalent in participants' personal goals, and 94 percent of participants said the 2010 Academy met their professional training needs and expectations. The 2011 BWSR Academy will seek to have further defined learning objectives that will allow participants to better tailor their course selection to have maximum individual benefit.

For more information: www.bwsr.state.mn.us/academy

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